

Tailgate/Toolbox Topics



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Setting Up a Tailgate/Toolbox Safety Meeting

Tailgate or Toolbox safety meetings are 10-15 minute on-the-job meetings held to keep employees alert to work-related accidents and illnesses.

Tailgate/toolbox safety meetings have proved their worth by alerting employees to workplace hazards, and by preventing accidents, illnesses and on-the-job injuries.

Why Have Them?

In both the tunneling and construction industries, tailgate safety meetings are required by Cal/OSHA regulations in Title 8, Sections 8406 and 1509 of the California Code of Regulations.

While tunneling and construction are the only industries that specifically require tailgate safety meetings, all California employers must have a safety program that includes employee training in safe work practices.

Tailgate/toolbox safety meetings can be used to address actual problems on the job or in the shop. The supervisor leading the meeting can draw on the experience of workers in the shop, and use that experience to remind all employees – especially newer ones – of the dangers of working with particular kinds of machinery, tools, equipment and materials.

What to Talk About?

Talk about work practices, machinery, tools, equipment materials, attitudes, and anything else that may cause or contribute to a work-related accident or illness. Keep the topic relevant. If you have punch presses, talk about punch press guarding. If you are building an apartment house, talk about lifelines and safety belts.

Choose a topic you think needs safety review. If you notice that spills aren't being cleaned up promptly, discuss it. If there has been an accident or a near-accident on the job, talk about it. What happened? Where did it happen? How can it be prevented from happening again?

Encourage employees to suggest topics. They often know best what and where the dangers are.

How to Run a Good Meeting

1. Hold the meeting on the job, preferably where everyone can sit and relax.
2. Hold the meeting at the beginning of the shift right after lunch, or after a break.
3. Choose the topic carefully. Topics should be about health and safety problems that really exist on the job. Research the problem before the meeting. There is plenty of easy-to-read material around on almost every industrial hazard you can think of. For machinery, consult the

manufacturer's operations manual. For handling toxic substances, get a copy of the material safety data sheet. Your company's insurance carrier is another good source of information. The California Division of Occupational safety and Health supplies a wide range of printed material on worksite safety and health.

4. Don't choose too broad a topic. You can't cover "Hand Tool Safety" in a 15-minute meeting. Instead, try a topic like "Defective Hand Tools."
5. Encourage as much employee participation as possible, yet keep your meeting short.

Sample Topics for Tailgate/Toolbox Safety Meetings:

Why are guards left off machines?

Guards are placed on machines to prevent workers from contacting moving parts. They are required by Cal/OSHA regulations.

Many California workers are killed or injured every year because guards are removed and not replaced.

Why are guards left off? Ask the group to give reasons.

Some common ones are:

- ♦ I didn't have time to replace the guard.
- ♦ The boss said, "Let's go."
- ♦ I wanted to make sure the machine was working okay. I just never got around to replacing the guard.
- ♦ I put on a new drive and the old guard didn't fit.
- ♦ I had to remove the guard to adjust the machine.
- ♦ I couldn't work with the guard on. It slowed me down too much.
- ♦ Listen I've run these machines for years without guards and I've never been hurt.

These excuses have been given countless times. After the accident has happened and someone has been killed or injured, the guard is replaced and strict rules are enforced to make sure the machine is never operated again without the guard. Of course, it's too late for the victim. The purpose of meeting on this topic is to make sure rules are enforced before an accident can happen.

Defective hand tools

Use examples of defective hand tools found on the job: mushroom heads, split handles, loose handles, dull or broken teeth, and spread wrenches. Point out the defects.

How many employees in the meeting had an accident or know of an accident caused by defective tools?

Set up a program for reporting, removing from use, repairing or replacing defective hand tools at your operation.